

**TO:** Still Hopes Residents and Staff

**FROM:** Danny Sanford, President & CEO and Nikki Robertson, VP of Health & Wellness

**DATE:** Thursday, December 29, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Update on Masking Requirements

Still Hopes Residents and Staff,

As predicted, we have seen an increase in COVID cases and exposures since the holiday season has begun. As of this morning, the CDC is reporting the COVID-19 Community Level is “High” for Lexington County and the Community Transmission Rate is also “High”. We will go into what this means for each area of campus below.

The Community Level references our “Independent Living” (IL) side of campus, meaning our apartments and cottages. **This increase in Community Level from the previous “Medium” status to the current status of “High” means that, effective immediately, staff on the IL side of campus must wear a mask while at work.** We have enjoyed a stretch of time when masks were optional for staff on the IL side of campus, but this must change for the time being. The CDC updates their Community Levels every week on Thursdays, so we will update you again next week.

While we are not requiring residents to wear masks on the IL side of campus, we are, once again, strongly encouraging the use of masks when you are outside your residence. We feel as though this decision should ultimately be left up to you, but we do ask that you are proactive and protect yourself and fellow residents the best you can. When the Community Level is “High”, the CDC also recommends the avoidance of “non-essential indoor activities in public where you could be exposed”. This means your Life Engagement Team may make the determination to cancel/reschedule some events for the next week. Your Life Engagement Team has already decided to postpone the Sharing and Gratitude Event that was to take place today at 3 pm in the Keenan Center. Please make note of this postponement in your calendars.

**Other notes for staff:**

- If you do not have a non-surgical mask with you, you can pick one up at the front desk in Greenway or McDowell.
- Masks may be removed in the break rooms while eating meals.

The Community Transmission Rate references our “Licensed” side of campus, meaning all of our Greenway neighborhoods. The Community Transmission Rate has been “High” in Lexington County for quite some time, so nothing is changing in terms of the masking requirements on the Licensed side of campus. However, visitors on the Licensed side of campus will be required to wear a mask at this time when visiting in the Greenway neighborhoods.

While we know this is not fun news, we can agree that it is not entirely unexpected. With increased gatherings and family time comes the increased risk of COVID exposure, which unfortunately is the current world we live in. Let’s pray this spike is temporary and we can enter the beginning of 2023 with lower COVID numbers. As always, thank you for your diligence and teamwork with us.